

BOOK REVIEW

Plant taxonomic literature in Australian libraries. Nancy T. Burbidge.
Published by CSIRO and ABRIS, Canberra, 1978. viii, 520 pp.,
1 b. & w. photograph. \$17.50 incl. postage.

This work, which was compiled as part of the Flora Project undertaken by the Australian Academy of Science in 1973 as the preparatory step towards the larger task of writing a new Flora of Australia, will be a useful guide for Australian botanists who wish to consult plant taxonomic literature.

While it is still necessary to call on overseas libraries at times, there is in Australia a wealth of the taxonomic literature that will be needed for the preparation of the new Flora of Australia. This book will do much to guide taxonomic botanists and librarians to an Australian source of the book that they wish to consult, even though, as its introduction makes clear, it is not complete.

It was compiled by Dr Burbidge on the basis of her 1951 list* and the holdings, in 1974, of the CSIRO Black Mountain Library, Canberra. This combined list was circulated to selected libraries where the librarians checked their holdings against it and, in many cases, added other relevant titles. Many of these titles were incorporated in the main list, but the completed list was not recirculated to the libraries so that they could check whether they also held the additional titles. This avoided placing on library staffs the undue burden of checking an additional list while still allowing readers to trace at least one Australian source of each listed article.

After all the work had been collected Dr Burbidge became ill and enlisted the help of Dr Alison McCusker who prepared the manuscript for publication.

It is not a list of periodicals. These are covered by the CSIRO publication 'Scientific Serials in Australian Libraries'. However some works which appeared in journals not commonly held in Australian libraries, but which are well-known under the relevant authors' names, have been deliberately included by Burbidge. One example is Eduard Regel's 'Alliorum adhuc cognitarum monographia'. Petropolis, 1875. 266 p. This is actually part of the journal *Acta Horti Petropolitani*, tomus 3. One can understand a reprint or pre-print of such a 266-page article being bound and catalogued as a book and it therefore merits inclusion in the work reviewed. In some libraries a desired work will be catalogued as either a journal or a book but not as both. The example given is an indication of the wide knowledge of literature and sleuthing qualities which are sometimes needed by research workers and librarians in taxonomic botany when they are seeking a particular reference.

Many seekers of knowledge for the new Flora of Australia will be grateful to Dr Burbidge for this work.

—MARY A. TODD

*Select List of Publications in Systematic Botany Available in Australia' by N.T. Burbidge (CSIRO Division of Plant Industry, Divisional Report No. 14).